

Hertz Rogovoy With His Wife Sofia And Friends



This is the Victory day, 9 May, in the Park of Honor in Kiev by the Eternal Flame. This is I, Hertz Rogovoy, on the right, my wife Sofia is next to me. The rest are the members of the all-Ukrainian Jewish Veterans' organization. I don't know the people around me, they are not from Kiev association of Jewish veterans, they arrived to celebrate 9 May. They just happened to be in this photo, we just exchanged few words, this was the first and the last time I saw them ... The picture was taken in Kiev in 2003.

In 1975 I found out that there was a vacancy of a therapist in the sanatorium of Ministry of Defense in the Kiev suburbs, Puscha-Voditsa. I went there and I was offered a job. I had worked there for 23 years and retired at the beginning 1998. They treated me in a great way during my working years. I was a civilian, but still I was given vouchers for treatment in the best spas of USSR. I was always selected in the honorable presidium at general meetings. I am not vain, it was just a demonstration of the positive attitude. They still keep a show-case devoted to my battle experience. I exerted every effort and used my knowledge to the benefit in my job, in treatment of patients, and I am given credit for it. Many retired militaries still remembers me and render to my assistance. I have forgotten many of them, but they still remember me. I went off war as a lieutenant. But since doctors are liable for military service no matter what they are specialized in, my rank periodically changed. The last rank was obtained this year - lieutenant colonel of the medical service.

When Ukraine was declared independent, a lot of Jewish communities appeared. There is a cultural center, which I like, and Hesed, performing great useful work. I do not trust other societies because I do not understand what they are dealing with. Why there are at loggerheads with each other, and what are they trying to divide. I am a member of the Kiev organization of Jew-veterans of war. I deal with medicine. I attend sick people in the hospital, officially receive war veterans. I have my reception hours. I am "a call-doctor" - veterans call me at any time, when they require a medical

consultation. There are getting less and less people in our organization. I was confounded at the last meeting. If earlier I used to come to the meetings beforehand, so I could occupy a seat as the hall was crammed, at that time there were only 35 people or so. People are getting older, die, but the organizations grow. I am very grateful to Hesed, and to those people, who give money to support its work. I know about Hesed not by hearsay. I have been working here since my retirement. I am taking patients in Hesed medical office every day. My conscience is clear, I am a volunteer and work for free. I consider, that my work, and the work of Hesed on the whole are needed. I see those who come here. These are indigent and miserable lonely people, who cannot make a living with their pension. One can judge it by the clothes they wear, and how during free dinner they eat potatoes in the canteen, and put fish cutlet in a bag and take it home. They even take slices of bread home. They are not just given dinner, they also receive provision and clothes, medical care, medicine. We have day hospital, I also work there. There one can be examined and treated. Another important thing is that Hesed provides the opportunity for those lonely old people to communicate with each other. People suffer from loneliness more than from diseases and poverty.

My wife is also working. On Aug 5, 2004 she turned 70, but they do not let her retire. Though she does not have any scientific degrees, she was conferred the most prestigious award in geology-Silver Geological Cross given by the state. Apart from Sofia 2 or 3 people were conferred this award in the institute. She is a great expert, and now they talk her into teaching students, so she can share her experience with them. It is hard for her to work full-time. She is working half -time.

I still remain religious. Though, there are only two holidays that I mark - Pesach and Yom Kippur. I certainly go to synagogue during those holidays. I attend the synagogue my father went to, the one located at Shchekavitskaya street. Unfortunately I do not know Hebrew, but I have a contemporary prayer book with Russian translation. The last 35 years I keep a tradition not to eat or drink during Yom Kippur. This year I fasted, too, even though I turned 80, and then I took my economy car, given to me as a handicapped during Great Patriotic War, and went to the synagogue. Though, I understand that I should not drive. I cannot stay there for the whole day, so I go there by 4 and stay by the end of the praying. Then I go home for the feast. This is the day of our family get-together. My grandchildren come. My daughter, though half-blood, always attends synagogue with me. My wife is aloof to that. She went there with me for two or three times. My daughter supports me and goes there with me. She knows how important it is for me. This is our tradition, along with the 9th of May, the victory day's tradition. The whole family gets together to go to the monument of the military honor. This tradition will be kept on, until I am alive.